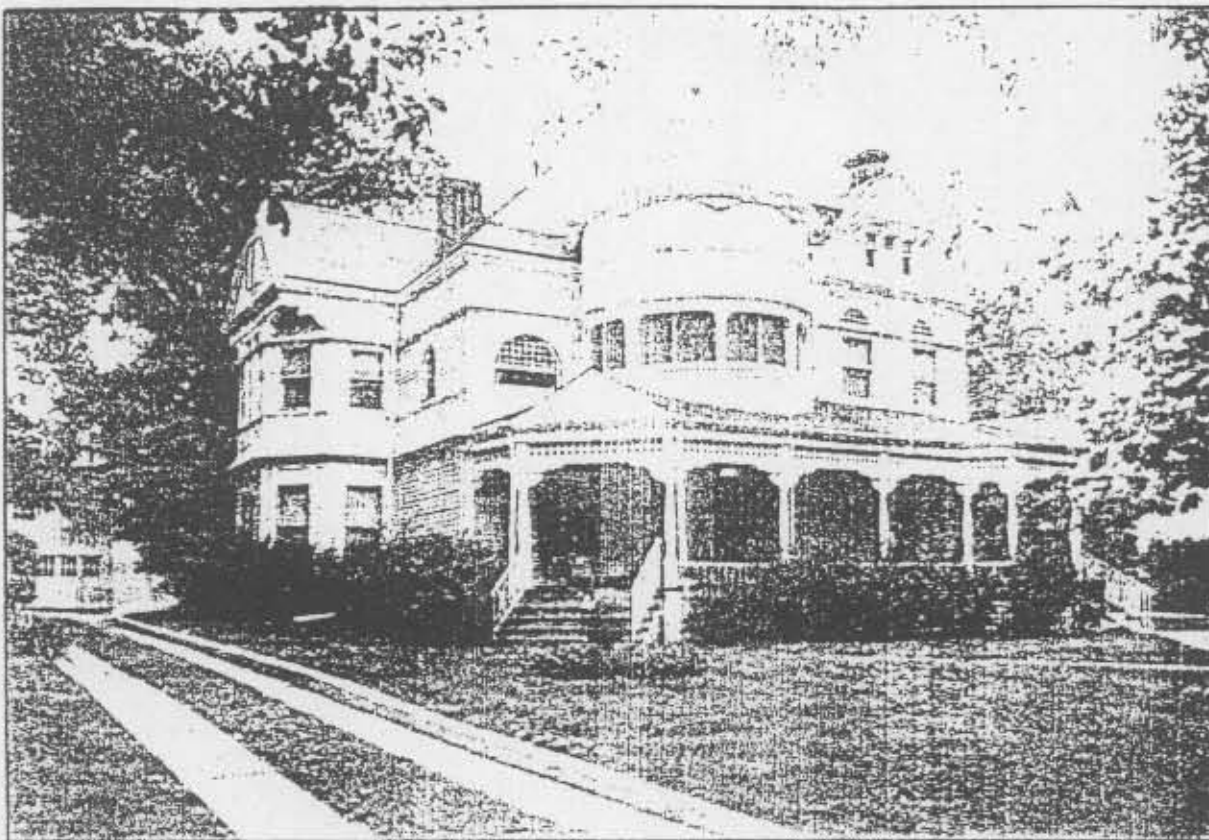


# Looking for recognition



Scott J. Weaver

The Petey Childers home at 801 S. Main St. has been recommended by a city commission for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Original stained-glass windows (below) flood the entry with colored light and add to the home's beauty.

## Petey Childers home dates to 1887

By Forrest Martin  
The Examiner

"Come back about 7 p.m.," Petey Childers said eagerly to his early morning guest as he walked out onto the veranda.

What he wanted him to see at that time is how the sunlight from the west streams through the stained glass windows and colors the ornate front staircase and walls.

That sight still gets to Childers, even though he has lived in the house at 801 S. Main St. for 26 years.

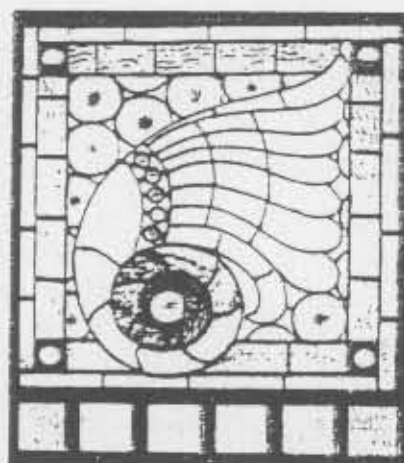
Stained glass windows, typical of the Queen Anne style architecture, are all through the 106-year-old Childers home.

The family hopes the home's architecture and careful preservation will prompt the U.S. Department of the Interior to place it on the National Register of Historic Places.

"The house is old. It's been taken care of and it's still here. I think it should be recognized," said Petey, retired pharmacist and businessman.

"There have been two old houses torn down on Main Street from this general period," said Mary Childers, one of Petey and Drusilla Childers' daughters.

The city's Heritage Commission recently recommended the house's nomination, the first of three steps required. Mary, a Heritage Commission member, was out of state when the commission



took action.

In August, the state will consider the application and, if it passes muster, recommend that the Interior Department approve it.

"They should find out sometime in September if it has been listed," said Rebecca Fulton, a University of Missouri-Columbia history student and former Independence resident.

Fulton wrote the application proposal for the Childers house. She had contacted the state's Department of Natural

Resources office in Independence, looking for ideas for a class project. They led her to the house she had drawn in 1988 for an art class calendar project at Truman High School.

"I'd always found the house intriguing," she said.

Fulton said it wasn't until the 1870s that the Queen Anne style was introduced into America. News accounts of the day referred to the enthusiasm for the style as "the craze for Queen Anne."

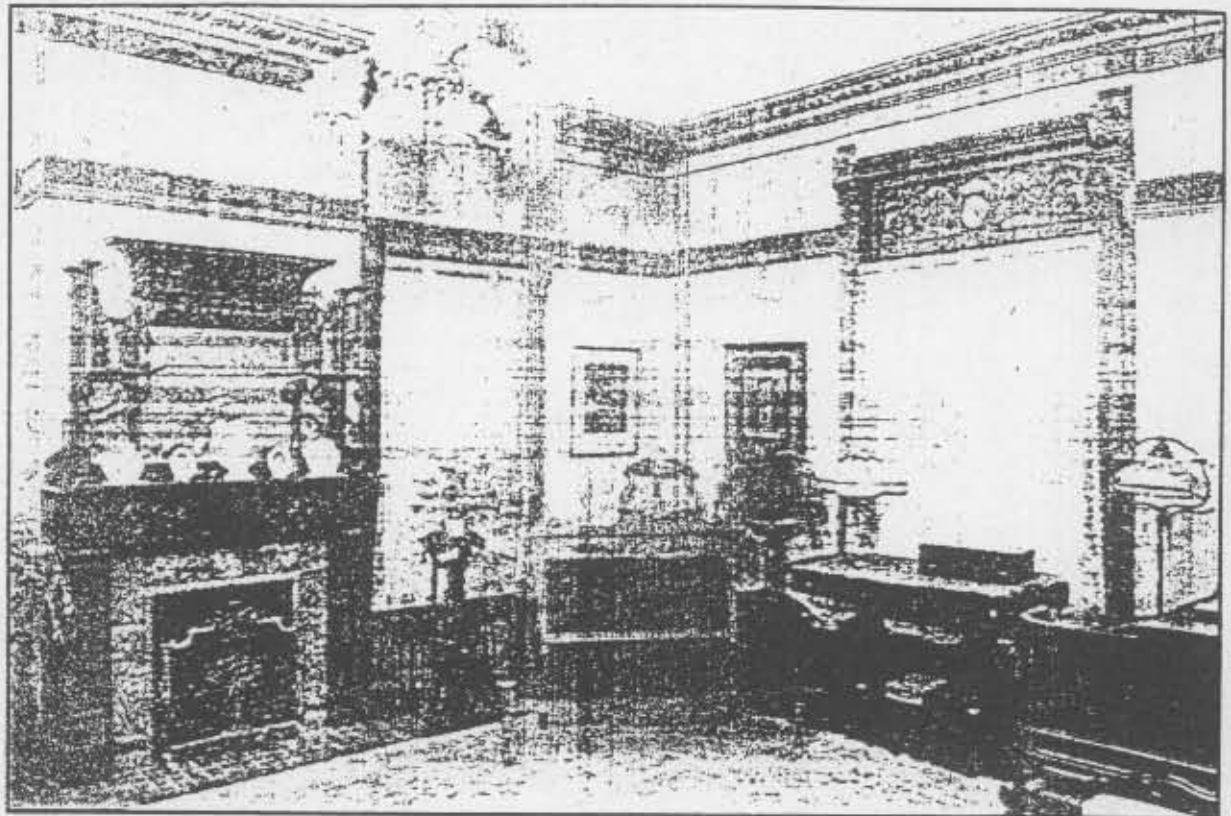
The house stands on a relatively flat lot, set back from the street, facing west. Its most significant characteristics include its rounded tower, wraparound porch, asymmetrical facade and stained glass windows.

Sitting on a foundation of limestone blocks, the entire house is sheathed in wooden clapboard and shingle. A slate roof caps the house.

The home was built in 1887 for Misses Mollie and Josie Hughes for \$10,000. They were the daughters of Thomas J. and Mary S. (Caldwell) Hughes, who emigrated from Kentucky.

The two women were the sole residents of the house until Josie married Frank C. Wyatt, who was president of the Bank of Independence, and he moved in with them. After their deaths, Mollie rented part of the second floor to a family for a brief time.

In 1929, Mollie's half-sister, Susan  
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The interior of the Petey Childers home remains much like it has always been. Some of the furniture is original to the house. Modernizing the home

has been limited mostly to improving bathrooms, updating the kitchen and enclosing a sleeping porch.

Scott D. Weaver

## Recognition: Sought

From Page 1A

Gregg, and her husband, Wallace Gregg, moved into the house. Mollie died in 1933 and left the home to the Greggs' son, Stanley, who was a vice president of the First National Bank of Independence.

Stanley, a widower, moved into the home with his two children where they were raised with the help of his parents. Stanley died in 1961 and the children sold the house the family had occupied for 74 years to Roy Fike.

"The Fikes wanted to make it into a rest home. The neighbors objected. We lived just two doors north but we didn't object because the neighbors did it for us," said Petey.

About five years later one of the neighbors mentioned to a member of Petey's family that the Stanley Gregg house was going in the market.

The Childerses thought it right away. "It never got on the market," said Mary.

When the family moved in, it was a homecoming for some of their furniture. After Stanley's death, they had bought some of the original furniture, such as beds and bookcases. The sideboard and matching furniture in the dining room is original and was purchased from the Fikes. The piano in the parlor was one "Miss Mollie" once played.

"They say when she opened the window and sang that the Waggoners could hear it down at their house," Petey said.

After the Childerses moved into the house in December 1966, they found the roof leaked. At one time they had 11 buckets catching water. Bess Truman, wife of Harry S. Truman, read about their plight in a news account of the house and called to tell them where they could find a good slate roof man.

The job got done. The slate weighed 3,600 pounds, recalls Petey.

"I remember there were 200 pounds of copper nails," said Mary. "They cost \$50 extra for copper. The galvanized nails would deteriorate."

Mary said Frank Davis, the city's historic preservation officer, first mentioned to her the idea of trying to get the house listed on the National Register.

"It's a great example of Queen Anne style architecture," said Davis.

The interior wood is all gum, except that in the master bedroom, which is cherry. The facade is dominated by the wraparound veranda and the circular tower on the northwest corner of the second floor.

The Childerses made few changes. They added a closet, rebuilt a deteriorated enclosed sleeping porch at the back of the house, added a shower and modernized the kitchen.

The house was designed in 1837 by the local architectural firm of Gibbs and Parker and was built by Christian Yetter. "We've got the original plans," Petey said.

## FAST FACTS

If the Childers home earns a spot on the National Register of Historic Places, it will join 15 other Independence sites:

- Harvey M. Vail Mansion (Vail Park), 1500 N. Liberty St. Added Oct. 1, 1969.
- 353 Jaff & Marshall's Home and Museum, 217 E. Main St. Added June 15, 1970.
- Harry S. Truman Historic District, North Delaware Street area. Added Nov. 11, 1971.
- Jackson County Courthouse, bounded by Lexington and Maple avenues and Liberty and Main streets. Added Oct. 18, 1972.
- Overfelt-Campbell-Johnston house, 305 S. Pleasant St. Added Sept. 5, 1975.
- Missouri Pacific Depot (Truman Train Station), 500 S. Grand Ave. Added Jan. 29, 1979.
- Trinity Episcopal Church, 409 N. Liberty St. Added April 27, 1979.
- Brigham-Waggoner home and estate, 313 W. Pacific Ave. Added May 2, 1980.
- Charles Minor house, 314 N. Spring St. Added March 22, 1984.
- Kritzer house, 115 E. Walnut St. Added April 1, 1985.
- Harry S. Truman National Historic Site (Truman home, summer White House; Gates/Holmes/Truman house), 219 N. Delaware St. Added May 31, 1985.
- Lewis-Webb house, 302 W. Mill St. Added Feb. 6, 1986.
- Woodson-Sawyer house (Araby West), 1604 W. Lexington Ave. Added March 20, 1986.
- Temple site (Mormon Temple site), Lexington Avenue at River Boulevard. Added Sept. 22, 1990.
- Dr. John S. Bryant and Harriet Smart house, 519 S. Main St. Added May 21, 1992.